



Search for the Chief Executive Officer  
California Council on Science & Technology  
Sacramento, CA

The California Council on Science & Technology seeks a dynamic and visionary Chief Executive Officer to lead the organization into its next era of impact as it refines and broadens its core mission of informing and catalyzing science and technology policy that positively impacts one of the most innovative and vibrant economies in the world, the State of California.

The California Council on Science & Technology (CCST) is a non-partisan, nonprofit organization established via the California State Legislature in 1988. It engages leading experts in science and technology to advise state policymakers, strengthening and informing California policy with scientific knowledge, research, and innovation across disciplines, including technology, physical sciences, life sciences, social sciences, and management sciences. In doing so, CCST supports California policymakers in improving the lives of all Californians, ensuring California remains a leader in technology and innovation, and guiding the state, nation, and world towards a healthy economy, society, and environment.

As a membership organization, CCST's core funding is provided by the state's institutions of higher education and research, including the three public higher education systems (the University of California, California State University, and California Community Colleges), several private research institutions (including California Institute of Technology, Stanford University, and the University of Southern California), and several federal research institutions (including national laboratories and NASA facilities). In short, CCST connects the various government branches of the world's fifth largest economy with an unmatched collection of the finest intellectual institutions in the world.

Currently, CCST translates and communicates policy-relevant science through expert briefings, workshops, and peer-reviewed reports. In addition, CCST manages and operates the CCST Science & Technology Policy Fellows program, which recruits and trains a cohort of 15 Ph.D. scientists and engineers to spend a year working in Sacramento, directly serving decision makers within the California State Legislature and Executive Branch. CCST recently secured a \$30M investment from the State of California to endow the Fellows program, a sign of the program's popularity and success.

The next CEO will build upon this foundation of strength, maintaining the excellence and prominence of the Fellows program while seeking creative new ways to fulfill the organization's mission. They will draw upon the enormous intellectual resources of the partner institutions and the Board of Directors to chart

a visionary path forward, positioning CCST to support the State of California in leading the nation and the world in solving tomorrow's most pressing problems. They will expand revenue streams, make savvy budgeting decisions, and actively engage in fundraising to increase CCST's capacity. Using their acute political acumen, the next CEO will enhance relationships with CCST's diverse stakeholders, including government officials, legislators, the partner institutions, and the Board of Directors, create partnerships with new organizations and sectors, and leverage the stakeholders' collective knowledge to make bold investments to build expertise around the topic areas that will animate future policy decisions in California. Finally, as the chief steward of CCST's culture, the CEO will ensure the organization maintains and grows its culture of collaboration, inclusivity, entrepreneurship, and flexibility.

In achieving these ambitious goals, the next CEO will address the following key opportunities and challenges, which are enumerated in greater detail later in this profile:

- Provide visionary leadership and strategic direction in service of CCST's mission
- Cultivate and further develop relationships with CCST's partner institutions to create a dynamic ecosystem of the best minds in the State that serve as the intellectual foundation of CCST's work
- Develop deep networks with key stakeholders who depend on the services of CCST
- Maintain and enhance CCST's suite of services
- Expand and diversify revenue streams and lead a talented and dedicated team to sustainably support CCST's growth

CCST has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this recruitment. Confidential inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed to the parties at the conclusion of this document.

## **ABOUT CALIFORNIA COUNCIL ON SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

CCST is an independent, 501(c)(3) organization, created in 1988 by a concurrent legislative resolution championed by a coalition of policymakers and institutional leaders led by then-Assemblymember Sam Farr and then-Senator John Garamendi. The organization's mission is to engage leading experts in science and technology to advise state policymakers, ensuring that California policy is strengthened and informed by scientific knowledge, research, and innovation.

CCST is modeled after the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine to provide the State of California with a parallel network of institutional and individual advisors. Following this model, CCST operates in partnership with, as well as receives financial and mission support from, a network of public and private higher-education institutions and federally funded research institutions:

- University of California
- California State University

- California Community Colleges
- California Institute of Technology (Caltech)
- Stanford University
- University of Southern California
- NASA Ames Research Center
- NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory
- Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory
- Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory
- Sandia National Laboratories
- SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory

CCST is governed by a [Board of Directors](#), made up of distinguished leaders from academia and industry, including those representing Sustaining Institutions and Federal Laboratory Affiliates. The Board is chaired by Peter Cowhey, who has served in that role since 2018. He is the Dean and Qualcomm Professor Emeritus at the University of California, San Diego's Graduate School of Global Policy & Strategy and directed the University of California system-wide Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation from 1999-2006.

CCST's values inform the organization's mission and guide its work. The core values of service, independence, and partnership are anchored in foundational commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion:

- **Service:** CCST is driven by a desire to serve and see science and technology applied to public policies that provide all Californians with opportunities to participate and prosper.
- **Independence:** As a nongovernmental, nonpartisan institution, CCST operates independently of organizations and individuals with a stake in the outcome of state policy decisions.
- **Partnership:** CCST works across institutions, partnering with academic, research, governmental, philanthropic, and other communities to leverage their collective expertise and diverse perspectives to fulfill the organization's mission.

CCST's staff of 19 includes a leadership team of a Deputy Director, a Director of Science Services, a Director of Philanthropy, a Director of Communications, and a Director of Finance and Operations. The majority of the staff sits within the Science Services organization, while a variety of other roles provide administrative and programmatic support. In addition to the staff and Board of Directors, CCST relies on an invited roster of more than 150 [distinguished scientists and technical experts](#).

CCST achieves its mission of providing state policymakers with nonpartisan scientific knowledge and research through several programs:

### *CCST Science & Technology Policy Fellows*

The [CCST Fellows program](#) annually recruits and trains a cohort of 15 Ph.D. scientists and engineers to spend a year working in Sacramento, assisting California decision makers in critical questions on a number of complex and dynamic issues facing the state, including the water supply, energy grid, and public health. During their year of public service, the Fellows get a front-row seat to learn about the craft and process of policymaking in the state, while state decision makers are given access to science-savvy staff who can inform policy discussions with scientific expertise. In recognition of the success of the program, the State of California recently invested \$30M to endow the program.

### *Publications and Projects*

CCST is dedicated to providing impartial expertise beyond the resources or perspectives of any single institution, and a primary method is through the creation of extensive publications produced through a rigorous study process and peer review process. These reports are often commissioned by state agencies or legislators, and CCST convenes world-class experts to develop the assessments, ensures full disclosure of conflicts of interest, conducts thorough, objective work based on scientifically sound principles, and provides rigorous peer review before reports are published.

To position the organization for future needs in the state of California, CCST has recently embarked on the disaster resilience initiative. In recognition of the increasing scale and complexity of disasters in California, including climate change, megafires, earthquakes, and pandemics, CCST redoubled efforts on disaster resilience to increase the delivery and responsiveness of advisory services provided by independent science and technology experts to state policymakers. Recent projects related to this initiative have included reports on the human health benefits of improving forest health in California, on key challenges for California's energy future, and on policy actions for pandemic preparation, response, and recovery.

### *Expert Briefings*

CCST Expert Briefings are presentations by panels of relevant experts on a range of topics. These briefings are used to convey the results of CCST reports, but may also be convened at the request of state government leaders to provide reliable, impartial expertise on topics when decision makers need information in a relatively short timeframe.

### *Science & Technology Week*

Science & Technology week is an annual conference held in February that includes a Science Day symposium, the presentation of CCST Leadership Awards for Science in Public Service, and expert briefings on topics critical to California's decision makers.

## **ROLE OF THE CEO**

The Chief Executive Officer of CCST will lead the organization's 19 staff in fulfilling its mission supporting policy and decision-making in California regarding science and technology issues. They will provide visionary leadership for the organization, leveraging the vast intellectual resources of the partner institutions, Board of Directors, and other stakeholders to identify future strategic directions and anticipate the needs of state decision makers. The CEO, who serves as an ex officio member of the Board of Directors, is responsible for developing programs and services to provide excellent science, engineering, and biomedical advice to the State of California's government and is responsible for CCST's administration, fundraising, and the organization's \$4M budget.

The next CEO will have the advantage of building from a place of strength. The organization is financially sound with a skilled professional staff and a reputation in the California legislature and executive branch for providing independent, non-partisan advice that draws on the state's best experts.

## **KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE CEO**

### **Provide visionary leadership and strategic direction in service of CCST's mission**

In partnership with the board, the staff, and partner institutions, the CEO is tasked with developing a bold strategic plan that will sharpen the organization's services, programs, and methods to amplify the successful work of the organization. A well-designed and executed plan will ensure CCST is known as the source of trusted, non-partisan information rooted in science and rigorous analysis. Ultimately, the CEO is responsible for ensuring CCST fulfills its goal of California government agencies, executive offices, and legislature receiving accurate and timely scientific information that significantly improves science and technology policymaking to benefit the lives of all Californians and, by extension, citizens across the nation and around the globe. By drawing on the immense insight and knowledge of CCST's diverse stakeholders, the CEO will identify upcoming areas of need so that CCST can build capacity, proactively add value, and influence the issues that will define future policy conversations.

### **Cultivate and further develop relationships with CCST's partner institutions to create a dynamic ecosystem of the best minds in the State that serve as the intellectual foundation of CCST's work**

CCST's partner organizations include some of the most impressive research and higher education institutions in the world, and the next CEO will deepen existing relationships while seeking new potential partners. The next CEO will make certain member organizations feel well-served by their engagement with CCST, proactively showcasing CCST's impact on policymaking in the state and seeking new ways to add value to the partnership. They must fully leverage the enormous intellectual and policy assets of the membership, developing collective insights and ideas that are greater than the sum of the individual parts. They will actively seek new members from diverse fields including higher education, nonprofit research organizations, and potentially technology industry partners, thereby improving the financial sustainability

of CCST while developing an even broader pool of intellectual resources to draw from. In addition, they will connect with organizations that represent the vast diversity of identities in California, ensuring CCST's partners are representative of the state.

#### **Develop deep networks with key stakeholders who depend on the services of CCST**

The next CEO will maintain, deepen, and expand CCST's relationships with California government officials across branches and agencies, ensuring these key stakeholders are aware of CCST's value and services while enhancing the organization's reputation for providing quality, accurate, and non-partisan information that aids effective policymaking. Given the rapidly changing and cyclical nature of government, stewarding CCST's reputation will require constant attention and a savvy understanding of policymaking and government affairs. In doing so, the CEO will better understand the needs of those who depend, or should depend, on CCST's important work while leveraging the resulting aggregation of insight to spot trends before they become apparent, offering key services and information to stakeholders before the need has been identified.

#### **Maintain and enhance CCST's suite of services**

CCST currently provides a broad and effective set of services, including placing policy fellows with state government officials, providing reports, and convening experts, all of which improve policymaking in the state by providing scientifically rigorous information. The next CEO will maintain and enhance these services. Through the CCST Fellows program, CCST increases the quantity and quality of policy experts in the state, providing scientific expertise to policymakers while offering an understanding of government processes to scientists. This excellence must be both maintained and expanded, maintaining the value of the Fellows for legislators, increasing applications with a careful eye to expanding the diversity of the cohorts, and increasing funding to grow the program and, with it, CCST's reputation among state officials.

Further, the next CEO will ensure that the reports produced by CCST are "best sellers." The reports must accurately describe current situations, thoughtfully show potential paths forward, and maintain CCST's reputation for providing unbiased knowledge. The CEO will be forward-looking, proactively building capacity around issues that will define future policy conversations to increase the timeliness of such reports. They will identify both areas of need and potential blind spots, thereby addressing topics that are relevant to all Californians, regardless of background. Further, they will seek ways to respond quickly to pressing questions from state policymakers without sacrificing the rigor or accuracy that is CCST's hallmark.

Finally, the next CEO will organize key gatherings that attract the best minds to have the most important conversations around science and technology opportunities and challenges for the state. They will increase opportunities to bring the state's most impressive scientists and technology experts together with government representatives and policymakers for the benefit of all parties.

### **Expand and diversify revenue streams and lead a talented and dedicated team to sustainably support CCST's growth**

As the chief steward of the organization's financial health, the next CEO will expand and diversify sources of revenue. They will retain and expand partner institutions, increase demand for CCST's services among government officials, and expand engagement with philanthropy and fundraising to increase CCST's capacity to provide services outside of immediate demands.

In addition, the next CEO will lead a talented team, dedicated to the mission of CCST. As the organization expands, they will make strategic decisions around where and when to expand capacity, invest in professional development and organizational culture, and recruit and retain a team that reflects the diversity of the state of California. The organization has grown considerably in recent years and, as growth continues, the next CEO will keep a careful eye on processes and procedures that will ease transitions and maintain operational excellence.

### **QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS**

The next CEO will be an inclusive leader and mentor, team player, skilled communicator, and hard worker who is eager to learn and grow. They will be comfortable challenging the status quo and discussing creative ideas or changes to existing processes. They will possess the political savvy and professional skills to manage and grow relationships with a broad range of stakeholders.

In addition to these personal qualities, they will have many, if not all, of the following qualifications and characteristics:

- An understanding of science and technology sufficient to bridge the world of research and policy. This could include a university degree in a scientific, engineering, or medical discipline, significant work experience in a scientific organization in non-profit or industry, or a record of research or policy-making on science and technology issues.
- Strong finance, strategy, and management skills, such as those often associated with an MBA.
- A broad understanding of and curiosity for science and technology across fields, disciplines, and industries.
- An excellent reputation for honing and developing products, services, and offerings of a dynamic policy organization.
- A willingness and aptitude for taking calculated risks.
- Experience in working with state or national government and an understanding of legislative processes. Candidates with a working knowledge of the California legislature and/or executive branch would be viewed favorably.
- Demonstrated success leading or operating in a multi-faceted fundraising organization.
- Experience presenting to and communicating with internal and external audiences across a range of sectors.

- Excellent strategy, problem-solving, diplomatic, and interpersonal skills.
- Superior written and verbal communication, active listening, and critical thinking skills.
- Strong administrative experience in hiring and supervising employees, constructing budgets, and general management, particularly in a growing organization.
- Experience in raising funds through grants and from philanthropic sources.
- Passion for the mission of CCST.
- Experience working with senior executive leadership or boards and familiarity with university decision-making processes.

## COMPENSATION AND LOCATION

Though the final salary will depend on the successful candidate's qualifications and experience, the estimated salary range for the position is \$175,000-\$225,000. The position is located in Sacramento, California, with a hybrid work schedule and a generous benefits package. Sacramento is America's Farm-to-Fork Capital, with plentiful farmers' markets and home-grown breweries. It is a family-friendly city with more than 230 days of sunshine each year. Sacramento is the fastest-growing major city in California and the state's sixth most populous city, as well as the seat of the California Legislature and the Governor of California.

## APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website for the search: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/california-council-science-and-technology/chief-executive-officer>. Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

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